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Viewing cable 04DUBLIN1566, C) NORTHERN IRELAND: UK AND IRISH TO HOLD TALKS

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Understanding cables

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- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#04DUBLIN1566**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
04DUBLIN1566	2004-10-14 16:20	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Dublin

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/wikileaks-ian-paisleys-dup-and-sinn-fein-Isquoin-direct-talks-for-yearsrsquo-16005987.html>

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 001566

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/2014

TAGS: [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [EI](#) [UK](#) [NIPP](#)

SUBJECT: (C) NORTHERN IRELAND: UK AND IRISH TO HOLD TALKS
WITH DUP AND SF

Classified By: Charge Jon Benton for reasons 1.4 b and d

1. (C) The Irish Department of Foreign Affairs confirms that proximity talks with the DUP and Sinn Fein will begin Friday October 15 in London. Senior officials from the two governments will shuttle between Sinn Fein and DUP representatives. The Irish government wants to keep this out of the press and believe they can, given that Gerry Adams has a separate reason for being in London. The Irish say it is time for both parties to show what is on offer, and then to see if they can come to terms on a comprehensive package, including modalities of decommissioning, DUP commitments on devolution and policing, and the issues surrounding how the institutions would work. Substance would be agreed first, then sequencing and a time line. Irish officials believe the elements of a deal are achievable, but caution that it always comes down to political will.

2. (C) Sinn Fein officials in Dublin have told us they are optimistic about the London talks, and cite one basis of their optimism to be a comment FM Ahern made to the press, to the effect that it is "only a matter of time" before Sinn Fein is in government in the south (see transcript, para 3). Sinn Fein has long wanted such a statement, arguing that the Irish government is not in a position to put pressure on DUP to work with Sinn Fein if it continues to say Sinn Fein cannot be in government in the Republic. DFA officials say, however, that there was nothing planned about the foreign minister's remarks. Rather, he responded to a question from the press in the same way he always responded before becoming foreign minister, and in a way consistent with longstanding Irish policy. Indeed, the day after Ahern's statement, the government emphasized that paramilitarism must end, decommissioning of weapons must take place, and private armies eliminated before Fianna Fail (the largest party in

government) would review its current opposition to Sinn Fein's participation in government. Education minister Hanafin added that Sinn Fein had "a long, long way to go." These statements aim to calm the Progressive Democrats, the junior party in the government coalition. Privately, some Fianna Fail party members have told embassy that they are the last party that would ever form a government with Sinn Fein. Opposition parties, predictably, are making hay out of the foreign minister's remarks.

13. (SBU) Remarks by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dermot Ahern, October 12

Journalist: "Minister Ahern, if the question of IRA weapons is sorted conclusively, definitively, if the DUP are asked to accept Sinn Fein as potential coalition partners (in Northern Ireland), what does that say about Fianna Fail's attitude about Sinn Fein down South? Will there be a change in those circumstances as well?"

Minister Ahern: "Well we have a particular stance as you know well but obviously if the circumstances change, the view in relation to SF going into government will change and I believe it is a matter of time, it is only a matter of time that SF will be in government in the future. But until such time as the IRA demonstrably show that they have put down arms forever and a day, there cannot be two armies. That the reality and it's the same in the north as it is in the republic....Obviously, circumstances will change. There will come a time, I envisage, where Sinn Fein will be in government in the republic as they will be in the north and I hope that happens in the future."

BENTON